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Supporters of Michelle Bachelet celebrate her victory in Chile's presidential election

'CENTRE LEFT' RETURNS IN CHILE

An election for the president of Chile took place on 15th December. Soon afterwards the country's electoral commission, or the organisation in charge of the election and vote counting, officially announced the results. It declared that, with just over 62% of the votes, Michelle Bachelet had won.

In Chile presidents are elected for four-year terms. They are not allowed to stand in successive elections. Ms Bachelet has been Chile's leader before. She became the country's first woman president eight years ago. Between 2006 and 2010 she was a popular leader. When she handed over to Sebastián Piñera in 2010, over 80% of Chileans thought she had done a good job.

The election on 15th December was a run-off. Chile has a rule that says a person must get over 50% of the votes to win a presidential election. This is

similar to many other countries that have presidential systems of government. If no one gets more than 50% then a second round, or run-off, is held. The two candidates who got the highest number of votes take part in the run-off.

The first round of the presidential election was held on 17th November. There were nine candidates. Ms Bachelet got 47% of the votes. This was nearly twice as many as her closest rival, Evelyn Matthei. On the same day elections were held for Chile's National Congress, or parliament. The National Congress is made up of the Chamber of Deputies (lower house) and the Senate (upper house).

In the run-off election 62% of the people voted for Ms Bachelet and 37% for Ms Matthei. The two women knew each other when they were very young. Both of their fathers were senior officers in the air force. Their families lived on the

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same military base in northern Chile. Then, Ms Bachelet was six years old and Ms Matthei four. They were not close friends because of the age difference. But sometimes they played and rode their bicycles together.

When a military force suddenly takes control of a country it is known as a coup d'état, or coup (pronounced 'coo'). This year marks the 40th anniversary of the 1973 military coup in Chile. General Augusto Pinochet led the takeover. He was head of Chile's army. Pinochet ordered soldiers to surround the presidential palace and arrest the president, Salvador Allende. To avoid being captured Allende committed suicide. Pinochet then took charge of the country.



Michelle Bachelet

Ms Bachelet's father supported Allende. The father of Ms Matthei was on Pinochet's side. Soon after the coup Ms Bachelet's father was arrested. He was held in a military school and tortured. The father of Ms Matthei was in charge of the military school. Six months after he was released Ms Bachelet's father had a heart attack and died. Many years later an investigation was held. Afterwards the people in charge of the investigation declared that the father of Ms Matthei was not to blame for Ms Bachelet's father's torture.

After Allende was elected in 1970 many people thought that he wanted Chile to become a communist state. The economy was getting

worse and the country's currency was losing its value.

At first many politicians and people supported Pinochet and the army. They thought Pinochet would organise new elections. Yet this did not happen. The general said that all traces of communism had to be removed. He believed that elected politicians would not be able to do this.

All political parties and trade unions were banned. The National Congress was closed. Many supporters of Allende were arrested. Over 3,000 of them were never seen again. Most people think they were murdered. Thousands more were imprisoned and tortured. They included Ms Bachelet and her mother who were arrested in 1975. After they were released they fled to Australia. Later they went to live in East Germany, which was part of the Russian-led Soviet Union.

Pinochet reorganised the country. Civilians, not military people, were appointed to run the country. The economy improved. Medical services became better. Drinking water supplies to the towns were modernised.

In 1988 Pinochet arranged a referendum, or vote in which all adults can take part. People were asked if they wanted him to stay on as president for the next eight years. Much to his surprise he lost: 57% voted 'no' and 43% 'yes'.

The following year elections were held. Different political parties were allowed to take part. In 1990 Pinochet handed over to Patricio Aylwin, who had been elected as the country's president. Pinochet then went back to leading the army. He retired in 1998 and died eight years later.

Ms Bachelet returned to Chile in 1989. She continued her studies and planned to become a paediatrician, or children's doctor. The following year she started working for

the ministry of health. She became interested in military plans and tactics. In the mid 1990s she studied military strategy in both Chile and the USA.

Ms Bachelet was appointed as Chile's health minister. In 2004 she became the country's first woman minister of defence. By this time Ms Bachelet was a well-known figure in the country. As a divorced mother and a grandmother, many women in Chile admired her.

Politicians and political parties are often described as being from the left, right or centre. Left, or left-wing, politicians believe the government is responsible for public welfare. They also want everyone to have a share of the country's wealth.

Right, or right-wing, politicians think it's not the government's job to make sure there is equality. They believe people are responsible for creating their own wealth and spending their own money. Politicians in the 'centre' are at the midpoint between left and right. They believe in a mix of both 'left' and 'right' [policies](#).

Mr Piñera is described as being on the 'centre right'. When he was elected in 2010, he was Chile's first 'right-wing' president since Pinochet. Ms Matthei is also a 'centre right' politician. Ms Bachelet is 'centre left'. Before the election she said that she would reduce the gap between rich and poor. Ms Bachelet also plans to improve health care and offer free university education. Yet to do this she will have to increase the taxes people pay.

In her victory speech Ms Bachelet, who is now 62, said 'we believe in hard work, in the people, and we believe that good ideas will [prevail](#)'. Ms Bachelet will officially become the new president on 11th March 2014. ■

BOLIVIA'S TUPAK KATARI

On 21st December many people crowded into a square in the centre of La Paz, the capital of Bolivia. There, on a giant screen, they watched a Chinese Long March rocket lift off. The rocket was carrying Bolivia's first satellite into space. The satellite launch was also shown live on Bolivian television.

Bolivia was one of the countries in South America that did not have its own communications satellite. The countries that already have their own satellites are Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Venezuela, and Colombia.



Chinese Long March rocket (CAST)

In 2010 Bolivia and China made an agreement. China would help scientists from Bolivia to design and build a new communications satellite. It would then be launched into space on top of a Chinese rocket. A Chinese bank agreed to provide most of the money that was needed for the project. This is a loan, so the Bolivian government has to repay the money.

The satellite has been called Tupak Katari. It is named after an indigenous leader who fought against the Spanish. Spanish soldiers or conquistadors arrived in this part of South America about 500 years ago.

Tupak Katari, which is also called Tksat-1, will orbit the Earth above the Equator. It is expected to become fully operational, or start working, next March. Technicians

in Bolivia will control the satellite. Most of Tksat-1's equipment will help to improve communications in the country.

Currently millions of people living in remote areas of Bolivia are not able to receive television, radio or mobile phone signals. This will change when the satellite starts working.

As well as improving communication signals the satellite will do several other things. These include weather forecasting, navigation and secret military communications. Scientific equipment on board can provide a lot of useful information. This includes what type of soil there is in different parts of the country. Tksat-1 will also monitor, or record, the growth of Bolivia's towns and cities.

Evo Morales has been the Bolivian president since 2006. He travelled to China to see the rocket lift off. This was the first time that a leader of another country has watched a satellite launch in China. Mr Morales also met with the Chinese president, Xi Jinping. In recent years China has helped to train satellite engineers in several other countries such as Nigeria, Pakistan and Venezuela.

Mr Morales said he was very happy that Tupak Katari had finally been launched. The cost of the project is believed to be about US\$300 million (£183 million). ■

UN REFUGEE APPEAL

On 16th December the United Nations (UN) started or launched a new appeal for Syria. It hopes to raise US\$6.5 billion (£4 billion). This urgent request for money is the UN's biggest ever humanitarian

appeal. It estimates that around 75% of the 22 million people who live in Syria will need help in 2014.

The war in Syria began nearly three years ago. The fighting is between the Syrian armed forces and those who are opposed to Syria's president, Bashar al-Assad. Mr al-Assad and his family have controlled the country for over 42 years.



As the fighting spread, some members of the Syrian army changed sides and joined the opposition. Fighting has been taking place in many parts of the country including the two largest cities, Damascus, the capital, and Aleppo. So far it's thought the fighting has been the cause of at least 125,000 deaths. Many of those who have been killed were civilians.

Some of the anti-government fighters, or rebels, formed an organisation known as the Free Syrian Army (FSA). In 2012 a group called the Syrian National Coalition (SNC) was set up. This group is supposed to represent all those who are opposed to Mr al-Assad and his government.

However, several other armed groups are now also fighting against the Syrian army. People from other Arab countries such as Iraq have set them up. These are Islamic militant groups. Their leaders want to create an Islamic state in Syria. If this happens everyone living in the country would have to follow very strict Islamic laws.

The SNC, the FSA and the Islamic militant groups all want to defeat the Syrian army. Yet they do not always agree with each other. Recently, one of the militant groups attacked an FSA base.

Many Syrians in certain parts of the country support Mr al-Assad and his government. Like the president, they believe all the rebels are terrorists who want to destroy Syria.



UN Syrian refugee camp in Jordan

Countries such as Russia and Iran have worked with Syria for many years. They support Mr al-Assad. Yet several other Arab nations, such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia, have been assisting the rebels. The leaders of countries such as the USA, the UK and France have all declared that they want the rebels to win. However, they are reluctant to help, as they don't want to assist the Islamic militant groups.

Most people think that the war is unlikely to end soon. One reason is that the five senior members of the UN Security Council (the USA, Russia, China, France, and the UK) disagree about what should happen in Syria.

As the war continues the refugee problem gets worse. The UN says that more than two million Syrians have crossed into Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon. Most are now living in large refugee camps.

Furthermore, the UN estimates that 6.3 million Syrians, still living in the country, have been forced

to leave their homes. The price of bread in Syria has gone up by 500%. Many people no longer have enough to eat. The UN wants wealthier countries to support its appeal. It says if the money is not given there will be a humanitarian disaster in Syria. ■

FIRST DOMESTICATED CATS?

A team of researchers working in China has made an important discovery about cats. What they have found might mean that cats were domesticated several thousand years earlier than previously thought.

Today, cats are the most popular pets in the world. They are found in almost every place where people live. DNA studies show that pet cats are related to the Near Eastern Wildcat. This wildcat lives in North Africa and parts of the Middle East.

Pet cats have not changed much since they were domesticated. They are still similar to wild cats. What's more it would be easy for a pet cat to live in the wild. Pet dogs are different. They are descended from wolves. Yet most dogs would not survive in the wild for very long.

Cats are able to see in the dark. Compared to humans they also have a much better sense of smell and hearing. Cats can hear the tiny noises that mice and other small animals make. Even pet cats will hunt and kill small mammals and birds.

Many people believe that humans first began 'owning' cats in ancient Egypt. Cats can be seen in many Egyptian carvings and paintings. Some of these are about 3,700 years old. However, some recent discoveries may mean cats were domesticated much earlier than this. For instance, a very old grave was

found in Cyprus in 2004. Inside were two skeletons, one human and the other a cat. The grave was about 9,500 years old.

The researchers have been working at a place called Quanhucun, in central China. There the remains of an ancient village have been found. People were living in this village about 5,300 years ago. From what the researchers have discovered they know that the villagers grew a type of millet. The seeds or grains of this plant are used to make flour. The villagers also kept domesticated pigs and dogs.

In the village the researchers found the bones of dogs, deer, pigs, cats, and rodents (rats and mice). Special scientific tests were done on the bones. From these the researchers were able to work out what the animals fed on. The dogs and pigs, and the rodents all ate millet. The cats fed on the rats and mice. The tests even showed that the rodents the cats ate had eaten millet.



Near Eastern Wildcat

The researchers also found the remains of pots. These were used to store millet grain. They were designed so rats and mice could not get inside them. The researchers believe the villagers had a rodent problem. Therefore, they were happy for cats to live in the village, as they helped control the rats and mice.

These cats were probably local wildcats. Yet if they were related to

the Near Eastern Wildcat they may have already been domesticated. If so, they would have been brought to China from somewhere closer to the Middle East. More work will be needed to find out if this is true. ■

KHODORKOVSKY RELEASED

Each year in December, Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, agrees to take part in a large press conference. Reporters working for Russian newspapers and television companies are invited. Mr Putin then answers their questions. This year's conference took place on 19th December.

Mr Putin was president of Russia between 2000 and 2008. For the following four years he was the country's prime minister. In 2012 he was re-elected as Russia's president. Mr Putin has therefore won three presidential elections.



President Putin's news conference

Before the last election there were several large street demonstrations. The people who joined the protests were unhappy. They said that Mr Putin should not be allowed to take part in another election. This, they claimed, was because he had already been president for eight years. However, most Russians support Mr Putin. In the election he won with 64% of the votes.

During the press conference Mr Putin made an announcement that

surprised many people. He said that Mikhail Khodorkovsky would be released from prison. Mr Putin explained that Mr Khodorkovsky had already spent ten years in prison and his mother was ill. Mr Khodorkovsky's prison term was expected to end next August.



Mikhail Khodorkovsky speaking with President Putin in 2002 (www.kremlin.ru)

Mr Khodorkovsky used to be the richest person in Russia. Yet after being imprisoned he became the country's most famous political prisoner.

Just before the Russian-led Soviet Union began to break up Mr Khodorkovsky set up a bank. This was one of Russia's first banks that was not run by the government. Russia held its first democratic elections in 1991. The elected government decided to sell many of its assets, or things that it owned. These included factories, buildings and oil and gas fields. Nowadays, people argue that these assets were sold far too cheaply.

In 1995 Mr Khodorkovsky used money he made from his bank to buy several oil fields. He set up an oil company called Yukos. It was very successful and Mr Khodorkovsky became the richest person in Russia. Businessmen who made lots of money from buying Russian government assets in the 1990s are often called 'oligarchs'.

Mr Putin became president in 2000. He decided to change many things that the previous government did. Mr Khodorkovsky suspected

that Mr Putin wanted Russia to go back to being a one party state. He began donating, or giving, money to political groups that opposed the president and his party.

In 2003 Mr Putin and Mr Khodorkovsky argued during a meeting. The argument was shown on television. Mr Khodorkovsky accused government officials of being dishonest and corrupt. Eight months later he was suddenly arrested. He was accused of not paying the correct amount of tax. After being held in prison for two years Mr Khodorkovsky was put on trial. He was found guilty of tax **evasion** and sent to a prison camp.

Mr Khodorkovsky says that he did not do anything wrong. Many people in other countries said his trial was unfair. They claimed he was imprisoned for political reasons. Yet Russian officials have always insisted he was punished for breaking tax laws.

Mr Khodorkovsky was released the day after Mr Putin's press conference. He immediately left Russia and travelled to Berlin, the capital of Germany. Mr Khodorkovsky is no longer wealthy. His companies were taken over by the Russian government. Most people believe that he will return to Russia. Some even predict that Mr Khodorkovsky will stand against Mr Putin at the next presidential election in 2018. ■

FIGHTING IN SOUTH SUDAN

On 21st December, Riek Machar announced that he was in charge of the anti-government, or rebel, forces in South Sudan. Mr Machar is the country's former vice president. Fighting in South Sudan broke out six days earlier. Many people fear it will become a civil war.

Sudan was a British colony until 1956. Soon after the country became independent, fighting broke out between the north and south. In the northern part of Sudan the majority of people speak Arabic and are Muslims. In the south most are black Africans, who follow Christianity or traditional African religions.



The United Nations (UN) helped to arrange a peace treaty in 2005. This ended the war. About two million people were killed during the fighting. Twice as many were forced to leave their homes. As part of the treaty it was agreed that the people living in the south would be allowed to decide if South Sudan should become a separate country.

In 2011 a referendum, or vote in which all adults can take part, was held in South Sudan. Nearly 99% of the people voted 'yes' for independence. Then, six months later, South Sudan officially became 'the world's newest country'.

Sudan used to make a lot of money by selling its oil to other countries. Most was sold to China. Roughly 70% of the oil that Sudan sold came from oilfields that are

now in South Sudan. However, the pipelines, which transport oil from these oilfields to the Red Sea, are in Sudan. These pipelines go to a place called Port Sudan. Here the oil is loaded into ships.

After South Sudan became a separate country the plan was for it to continue to send its oil along the pipelines to the Red Sea. South Sudan would then pay Sudan for using the pipelines. But both sides have argued about the price.

The recent trouble began on 15th December. Fighting broke out in Juba, South Sudan's capital city. Salva Kiir, the country's president, said soldiers, who supported Mr Machar, had tried but failed to take over the government. When a military force takes over a country it is known as a coup d'état, or coup (pronounced 'coo'). Mr Kiir accused Mr Machar of planning a coup. Yet at the time Mr Machar said he was not involved. Last July, Mr Kiir dismissed, or sacked, Mr Machar from his position as vice president.

In South Sudan there are a number of tribal or ethnic groups. The two largest are the Dinka and the Nuer. Mr Machar is from the Nuer tribe and Mr Kiir is a Dinka.

The UN has several camps in South Sudan. After the fighting started thousands of people went to these camps for safety. The rebels attacked a UN camp in a town called Akobo. Two UN peacekeeping soldiers from India were killed.

People from other countries such as Uganda and the USA have been working in South Sudan. Planes were sent to fly them out of the country. In the town of Bor the rebels fired at an American plane.

Mr Machar claims that the rebels are now in control of large parts of South Sudan. This, he says, includes

the area where the oilfields are. Mr Kiir has agreed to meet officials from other African countries to try to find a way of ending the fighting. ■

CHOCOLATE DEAL

On 20th December Hershey's announced that it had agreed to buy a company in China. The Chinese company is called Shanghai Golden Monkey. When one company buys another it is often called a 'deal' or an 'acquisition'.

The Hershey Company is based in the USA. It is one of the largest chocolate making companies in the world. Milton S Hershey founded the chocolate company over 110 years ago. Then, milk chocolate was an expensive luxury. Hershey wanted to find a way of mass-producing milk chocolate so everyone could buy it.



Hershey first bought some farmland in the state of Pennsylvania. There he was able to get large supplies of fresh milk. He then created his own recipe, or formula, for milk chocolate. The first Hershey chocolate bar was made in 1900. A few years later Hershey began building a large factory on the farmland he had bought. It opened in 1905. Hershey's soon became the world's largest chocolate company.

With the boss's help, a new town with workers' houses, schools, churches, and shops grew up around the factory. The town was named Hershey. Today, the company employs around 14,000 people around the world. Its total sales, or

revenues, last year were about US\$7 billion (£4.3 billion).

The company still has its headquarters and main factory in Hershey. In the town there are streets named Chocolate Avenue and Cocoa Avenue. (Chocolate is made from cocoa beans or seeds.) The streetlights are shaped like a Hershey's Kiss. This is a popular chocolate sweet, which the company first started making in 1907.



The town of Hershey in Pennsylvania

The Shanghai Golden Monkey Company (SGM) was set up in 1996. It makes sweets and snacks that are popular in China. These include wafer sticks, which are flavoured with seaweed, spicy dried tofu, and strawberry-flavoured cheese sweets. SGM has about 5,000 workers and annual sales of US\$225 million (£137 million).

People in China are now buying more and more sweets and chocolates. Some of Hershey's chocolates are already sold in China. But these are made elsewhere and imported into the country. This year Hershey's made a new sweet for China. The sweet is the first that Hershey's has made for another country. Made out of condensed milk it is called the Lancaster. The sweet is named after a town in Pennsylvania. This is where Hershey first started making candy in 1886.

SGM is the first company that Hershey's has bought outside the USA. Officials at Hershey's say

SGM will help the company increase its sales in China. The acquisition of SGM is expected to cost US\$584 million (£357 million). ■

PERSON OF THE YEAR 2013

Time is a well-known American weekly news magazine. Each December the magazine chooses its 'Person of the Year'. *Time*'s choice for 2013 is Pope Francis, the leader of the Roman Catholic Church.

Time first started selecting its 'Man of the Year' in 1927. Since then it has done so every year. The person selected appears on the front cover of the magazine's final issue in December. In 1999 *Time* changed the title from 'Man of the Year' to 'Person of the Year'.

The first *Time*'s 'Man of the Year' was Charles Lindbergh. He was a pilot. In 1927, Lindbergh was the first person to fly across the Atlantic Ocean from New York, in the USA, to Paris, the capital of France.

Time says its 'Person of the Year' is someone it thinks has had the biggest effect on world news over the last 12 months. The person may have done something good or bad. Yet whatever they did, it must have made a difference or caused changes.

The magazine insists that 'Person of the Year' is not meant to be an award or honour. In the past it has selected people who have become mass murderers. Both the leader of Nazi Germany, Adolf Hitler, and Joseph Stalin, a former leader of the Russian-led Soviet Union, have been 'Man of the Year'. Stalin was chosen twice.

Winston Churchill, a former UK prime minister and wartime leader, was also selected twice. Other 'doubles' are four American presidents,

Franklin D Roosevelt, Richard Nixon, George W Bush, and Barack Obama.

Time's 'Person of the Year' is not always a single person, or even a person at all. For example, in 1983 the personal computer was chosen. Two years ago the 'Person of the Year' was 'The Protester'. In 2011 there were many street demonstrations in Arab countries. These included Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Syria, and Yemen. The protesters were complaining about similar things. They claimed that the leaders, politicians and police officials in their countries were corrupt or dishonest. They demanded that proper elections be held. These demonstrations are now known as the 'Arab Spring'.



Cover of *Time*'s last issue of 2013

Pope Francis, who is from Argentina, was selected to be head of the Roman Catholic Church nine months ago. This was after the church's previous leader, Pope Benedict the Sixteenth, decided to retire, or stand down. Pope Francis often talks about the importance of protecting children and the elderly, especially those who are poor and need help. This is the third time that the leader of the Roman Catholic Church has been on

the front cover of *Time*'s final issue of the year. The previous two were in 1962 and 1994.

This year's runner up, or the person in second place, was Edward Snowden. Mr Snowden used to work for the American National Security Agency (NSA).

Last March Mr Snowden suddenly left his job and travelled to Hong Kong, in China. There he passed secret information to two newspapers. People who take the risk of doing this are often called 'whistleblowers' or 'leakers'. The newspapers then printed stories about the NSA's operations. The stories claimed that the NSA secretly listened to thousands of telephone calls. These included the mobile phone calls made by many European and South American leaders. Mr Snowden is now living in Russia.

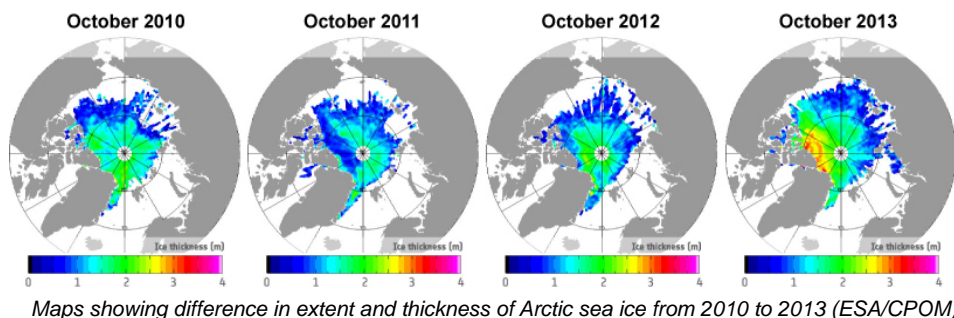
In 1999 *Time* chose Albert Einstein (1878 – 1955), the famous scientist, to be its 'Person of the Century'. ■

ARCTIC SEA ICE

The European Space Agency (ESA) recently released information about the volume of sea ice in the Arctic. The information showed how much sea ice there was in October, or two months ago. When compared with similar information from last year it shows that the amount of ice has greatly increased.

This information about the Arctic sea ice surprised many people. As average world temperatures have been increasing, most expected the ice to continue to shrink. Some have even predicted that all the Arctic sea ice will be gone in 30 years' time.

An ESA satellite recorded the information about the sea ice. Called CryoSat-2, it was launched at the beginning of 2010. The satellite was



specially designed to measure and map ice on land and sea.

For some time scientists have been worried about sea ice in the Arctic. Normally, areas of sea ice melt in warmer summer months. The sea then freezes again during the cold winter. Yet over the last 30 years, more ice seemed to be melting than refreezing. So the amount of ice and its extent, or the area it covers, have been getting smaller.

For many years older satellites were able to measure the area of sea covered by the ice in the Arctic. Yet they were unable to work out how thick it was. This is one of the things that CryoSat-2 has been designed to do.

CryoSat-2 uses a special type of radar to measure the distance between it and the top of the ice. The satellite is also able to record its distance from the surface of open sea nearby. By subtracting one figure from the other it can work out the thickness of ice above the sea.

However, most of the ice in ice floes, or floating ice, is under the sea's surface. The proportion of sea ice above and below the surface is known to be 1/8 above and 7/8 below. So, if the thickness of the ice above the surface is known, it is easy to work out its total thickness.

Knowing the total amount of ice is important. In some years the wind can be strong enough to push ice floes on top of each other. This means the ice may not cover such a large area. Yet in some places it

could be twice as thick. Therefore from an ordinary satellite picture more ice looks as if it has melted.

The ESA says that the total amount of ice last October was about 6,000 cubic kilometres (1,440 cubic miles). This year's figure is roughly 9,000 cubic kilometres (2,160 cubic miles). However, many scientists say the increase is probably temporary. So the ice may start to shrink again either next year, or within a few years. It is estimated that the amount of sea ice in the Arctic in the early 1980s was 20,000 cubic kilometres (4,800 cubic miles). So this October's figure is much less than it was 30 years ago.

NewsCast

TOY CAR — A teenager from Romania has built a life-sized plastic car. He made it out of 500,000 Lego bricks. The Lego Company, which is from Denmark, makes different coloured plastic bricks that can easily fit together. Lego is one of the world's most popular toys. Life-sized Lego cars have been made before, but this one is different. It works. The car has four air-powered engines and over 250 pistons, all made from the plastic bricks. A businessman from Australia helped to provide the money for the project. The car was sent to Australia to be tested. There, after some parts were put back together, it was given a test drive. The car reached a speed of 19 kilometres (12 miles) per hour.

CryoSat-2 can also measure the thickness of ice on land. Again, a type of radar is used. The **echo** of the radar bounces off the land below the ice. The time it takes the echo to return to the satellite is measured. From this it's possible to work out the thickness of the ice on top of the land. So, any change in the thickness of ice in Antarctica and in Greenland, in the Arctic, can now also be recorded. ■

AUSTRALIAN COMBAT TROOPS LEAVE AFGHANISTAN

On 16th December Tony Abbott, the Australian prime minister, announced that all his country's combat troops had now left Afghanistan. Combat troops are the soldiers that are specially trained to fight.

Australian combat troops first arrived in Afghanistan soon after the war started in 2001. Since then around 26,500 Australian soldiers have served in the country. During the war 40 have been killed and 261 seriously injured.

The Australian soldiers were part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) commanders lead this force. Most of the ISAF troops in Afghanistan are from the USA. Yet others come from at least 45 countries.

In 2001 an Islamic militant group, called al-Qaeda, attacked the USA. Members of the group hijacked four passenger planes. Three were deliberately flown into buildings in New York City and Washington DC, the capital. The other crash-landed in a field.

Then, the Taliban controlled Afghanistan. During this time

everyone had to follow very strict Islamic laws. The Taliban allowed al-Qaeda to operate its training camps in Afghanistan. The government of the USA demanded that the Taliban hand over the al-Qaeda leaders. When the Taliban refused, American troops invaded the country. NATO member countries and many others, such as Australia, offered to help the USA in its fight against al-Qaeda and the Taliban.



Soon after the invasion, the Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters withdrew to the mountainous area along the border with Pakistan. But they did not give up. The USA helped to organise elections. Since 2003, Afghanistan has had an elected president and elected members of its National Assembly, or parliament.

The United Nations (UN) set up ISAF in 2001. At first its job was to fight against Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters. ISAF troops were sent to different parts of the country. There they have helped to train Afghanistan's new army and police force. The country's new army is called the ANA (Afghan National Army). Most Australian soldiers were based in Uruzgan province, in the centre of the country.

However, from their secret bases in the mountains, Taliban and al-Qaeda fighters have continued to attack ISAF troops and the ANA. They have also carried out

bombings and shootings in larger towns and cities including Kabul, the capital.

Several years ago Barack Obama, the president of the USA, made an important announcement about Afghanistan. He said that all American combat troops would leave the country by the end of 2014. Other countries that have military forces in Afghanistan then declared that their troops would leave before this date.

For the last two years American and ISAF soldiers have been handing over parts of Afghanistan to the ANA. The ANA took control of Uruzgan over 12 months ago. Since then the Australian forces have been helping the Afghan soldiers. Before the handover in Uruzgan, troops from the Netherlands were also based in the province. They left in 2010.

Some people suspect that the Taliban are waiting for the American and ISAF forces to go. Once this happens it will try to take over the country again. These people think the ANA is unlikely to be able to stop this from happening. They say the only way to end the war is to arrange peace talks with Taliban leaders.



Australian soldier in Afghanistan

Mr Abbott explained that around 400 Australian support troops would be staying in Afghanistan. Based in Kabul and Kandahar, they will continue to help with military training and advice. Mr Abbott also declared

that Australia would give the Afghan government A\$100 million (£54.5 million) each year. The prime minister said he was proud of what Australian soldiers had achieved in Afghanistan. ■

TSUNAMI CAVE

Scientists from a university in Singapore have been working in a cave in Indonesia. Digging into the sand on the cave's floor they discovered a number of layers. Each one was formed by a giant Indian Ocean tsunami. The layers show when tsunamis struck this part of Indonesia. The 'layer record' goes back thousands of years.

A tsunami is a huge surge, or several surges, of seawater. As the front of the surge or wave gets closer to the coast it increases in height. Tsunamis can happen when powerful earthquakes make a large part of the seabed suddenly move up or down. A tsunami can be hundreds of kilometres long and travel great distances.



Tsunami cave in Sumatra (EOS/NTU)

Tsunami is a Japanese word. It means 'harbour wave'. Hundreds of years ago Japanese fishermen were puzzled by these giant waves. They fished far away from the coast. If a tsunami happened, they would find a destroyed or badly damaged harbour on their return. Yet far out at sea they would not have seen any giant waves.

Over the last ten years there have been two deadly tsunamis. In 2004 a powerful earthquake under the Indian Ocean created a tsunami that affected 14 countries. It killed over 230,000 people. Most of those who died were in Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and India. In 2011 there was a huge undersea earthquake off the north east coast of Japan. The earthquake and the tsunami that followed killed 19,000 people.

The cave in Indonesia is on the north west coast of Sumatra. This is the largest island in Indonesia. This part of the country was struck by the 2004 tsunami. The cave is about 91 metres (300 feet) from the sea. Its entrance is quite high, which means only a tsunami wave can reach it. The cave is also home to many bats.

When a tsunami wave reaches the shore it is full of sand, small stones and other things picked up from the seabed. Tsunami waves that entered the cave left this debris on the cave's floor. Then, over many years, this layer of sand would be covered by bat droppings, or guano. When the next tsunami filled the cave, it left another layer of sand on top of the guano.

When the scientists dug into the cave's floor they were able to see layers of sand and guano. Each layer of sand was left by a tsunami. Scientific tests on things found in the sand and guano can date the different layers. The tsunami record in the cave goes back about 7,000 years.

Layers in the cave therefore show when tsunamis struck northern Sumatra in the past. The scientists are continuing their work. However, the cave record suggests tsunamis in this part of the world are not evenly spaced. Some are only a few years apart, yet the gap between others is hundreds of years. ■

PICASSO PRIZE

An American man won an unusual, but valuable, prize, on 18th December. His raffle ticket was picked by a computer system. A raffle is a way of raising money. People can buy tickets that are numbered. The winning numbers are then **randomly** picked, or drawn, from all the tickets that have been sold.

The man's prize was a 23-centimetre (nine inch) by 30-centimetre (12 inch) drawing. Pablo Picasso drew the picture in 1914. Called the *L'Homme au Gibus* (Man with Opera Hat), it is worth around US\$1 million (£610,000).



L'Homme au Gibus by Picasso

Picasso (1881 – 1973) was born in Spain. Even though he didn't make much money from his works of art in his younger years, he later became very wealthy. To many people, Picasso is the 20th century's most famous painter. Today, his pictures are very valuable.

Picasso painted in a style known as Cubism. Some artists began painting in this style in the early 1900s. In Cubist works of art, objects, including people, are painted

as if they have been broken into pieces. Each piece is painted as if it is seen from a different angle from the others. The final picture looks as if all the pieces have been roughly put back together again.



Ancient ruins of the city of Tyre

The winning raffle ticket was drawn at Sotheby's in Paris, the capital of France. Sotheby's is a well-known international auction company.

An organisation called the International Association to Save Tyre (IAST) arranged the raffle. It works to preserve the ruins of an ancient city. Tyre was founded on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea over 4,000 years ago. It is believed to be one of the world's oldest cities.

Today the ruins of Tyre are in southern Lebanon. Thousands of years ago it was a Phoenician city. The Phoenicians lived along the coast of modern-day Syria, Lebanon and Israel between BCE 1550 and 300 CE. They were expert ship builders and [seafarers](#). Using their wooden sailing ships Phoenician sailors traded goods around the coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

Throughout history Tyre was attacked many times. Alexander the Great captured and deliberately damaged the city. Later the Romans, Arab [conquerors](#) and Christian [crusaders](#) all occupied Tyre.

The IAST says that Lebanon does not have the money that is needed to look after the ruins. Recently one of its wealthy supporters agreed to

lend the IAST some money. This money was used to buy the Picasso drawing. The IAST then advertised the Picasso raffle on its website. There were 50,000 tickets, which were all sold online. Each one cost €100 (£84). No one was allowed to buy more than 50.

The IAST says the raffle raised about US\$5 million (£3 million). The money will be used to help to repair the ruins of Tyre. Before organising the raffle the IAST spoke with Picasso's son, Olivier. He said his father would have been pleased that the drawing was used to raise money for the ancient city. The person who won the Picasso picture says he plans to hang it on a wall in his house. ■

CHINA'S MOON LANDING

On 14th December a Chinese unmanned spacecraft successfully landed on the Moon. This was the first 'soft', or controlled, touchdown on the Moon's surface for 37 years. The only other nations to have done this are the USA and the former Russian-led Soviet Union.



Computer generated picture of the Chang'e 3 lunar lander and Yutu on the Moon's surface

The spacecraft that landed on the Moon is called Chang'e 3. Chang'e 1 was launched in 2007. It then orbited, or went around, the Moon for two years. Chang'e 2 began orbiting the Moon in 2010.

Chang'e 1 and 2 were what's known as lunar orbiters. Chang'e 3 is a lunar lander. It was launched into space on top of a powerful rocket on 2nd December. Chang'e 3 was carrying a six-wheeled vehicle, or rover. This lunar rover is called Yutu, which means 'Jade Rabbit'.

The Chang'e name comes from an ancient Chinese folktale, or legend. In the folktale a woman called Chang'e swallows some magic pills. She then flew to the Moon, where she became a goddess. The woman took Yutu, her pet white rabbit, with her. The legend says that Chang'e and Yutu still live on the Moon.

From the Earth we can only ever see one side of the Moon. The other side is often called the 'dark side' or the 'far side'. The time it takes the Moon to orbit the Earth is about the same time that our planet takes to spin once on its own axis. So it is always the near side of the Moon we see in the night sky.

The near side of the Moon is different to the far side. The near side has large, flat, darker areas called basins. These are lava plains. Scientists believe that magma, or very hot liquid rock, coming up from below the Moon's surface formed these lava plains. This happened many millions of years ago. The lava plains are often called 'seas' or 'mare' (the Latin word for sea).

Chang'e 3 landed on a lava plain called *Sinus Iridum* (Latin for 'Bay of Rainbows'). Scientists in China can remotely control the Jade Rabbit lunar rover. A few hours after the landing the rover was driven down some ramps and onto the Moon's surface. Chang'e 3 and Yutu then took some pictures of each other.

Yutu has several cameras. It also has two mechanical legs. These can dig into the soil. The rover's radar can

'see' or penetrate deep below the surface. Yutu will take measurements of the soil and dust. The rover should be able to detect if this part of the Moon has any valuable elements such as titanium and uranium. In future it may be possible to mine these elements and transport them to the Earth.

Yutu will explore an area of about three square kilometres (1.2 square miles). The rover has solar panels, so it gets its power from the Sun. During the lunar nights Yutu will shut down until the Sun reappears. Yutu is expected to operate for about three months.

The next Chinese lunar space mission, Chang'e 4, will take place in 2017. Part of this spacecraft will probably return to the Earth carrying samples of Moon rocks and soil. After this China may launch a manned space mission to the Moon. ■

THE REAL NOAH'S ARK?

A man, who works at the British Museum in London, the capital of the UK, claims to have found an ancient description of Noah's Ark. Dr Irving Finkel is an expert on **deciphering** or reading cuneiform script. The description is written on a 3,700-year-old clay tablet.

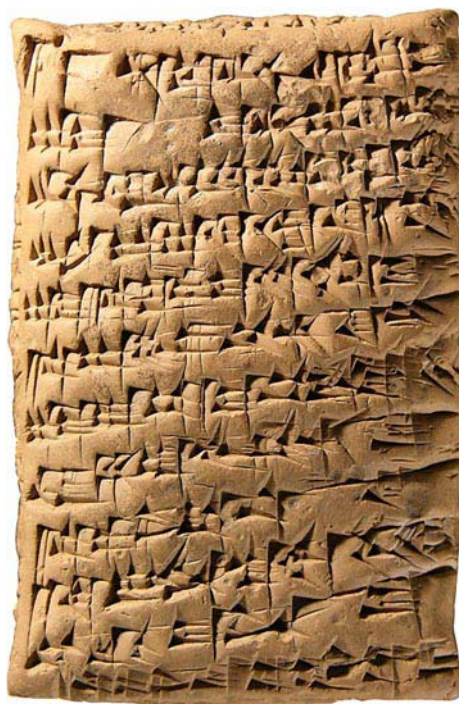
The story of Noah is mentioned in ancient Jewish, Christian and Islamic writings. The first book of the Christian Bible is called *Genesis*. In this book there is a story about 'a great flood'. God tells Noah that he is going to send a flood to punish people for their sins. God then orders Noah to build an enormous wooden ark, or boat.

Once the ark has been finished, God sends two of every animal to Noah to be loaded into it. In the story, apart from the fish in the sea,

Noah, his family and the animals in the ark are the only survivors of the flood. When the floodwaters recede, or go down, the ark comes to rest 'on the mountains of Ararat'. Mount Ararat is in modern day Turkey.

Experts calculate that if the story were true the flood would have happened about 4,800 years ago. In 2012 a man in the Netherlands built a wooden copy, or replica, of Noah's Ark. He used the same measurements listed in the *Book of Genesis*.

Many years ago experts discovered a very similar story. It was written on clay tablets. The story is included in a tale called the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. This tale comes from the Sumerian civilisation. The city of Sumer was in Mesopotamia, or modern day Iraq. Sumer was founded about 6,000 years ago.



Cuneiform tablet

The *Epic of Gilgamesh* was written in the cuneiform script or alphabet. This script is made up of different wedge-like shapes and lines. A 'pen' made from the stem of a reed plant was used to write it.

Cuneiform was written on soft, wet clay tablets. These were then left to dry out and harden. The name of the script comes from the Latin word *cuneus*, which means wedge.



Quffa boat

In the story the Sumerian god tells a king, called Atra-Hasis, to destroy his house and build a boat. The Sumerian story is almost exactly the same as the story of Noah. Most experts are therefore sure that the story in the *Book of Genesis* was copied from the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.

In 2008 a man took a cuneiform tablet to the British Museum. The man's father was in the air force. He had been in Iraq between 1945 and 1948 and brought the tablet back with him. When he died it was passed to his son.

Dr Finkel was asked to translate the tablet. He was surprised to find that it described the boat that Atra-Hasis was told to build. Yet unlike Noah's Ark, the huge boat was round. Its diameter was 67 metres (220 feet). The boat's walls were six metres (20 feet) high. It had two levels and a roof. Inside, it was divided into sections for the different animals. The boat was made from reeds and ropes. These were covered in bitumen, or pitch, to make them waterproof.

Today, some people who live in southern Iraq still make round boats. Called quffa, they are for one or two people. So they are very much

smaller than Atra-Hasis's boat. Dr Finkel says there are many cuneiform tablets that tell the story of the flood, yet until now none have been found that described the shape of the boat.

Most experts think the 'great flood' story is a myth. They argue that the floodwaters must have been very high to leave a boat near the top of the mountain. If this happened all of modern-day Iraq and Egypt, as well as the rest of the Middle East, would have been covered in water. Yet it's known that cities in this part of the world were not flooded at this time. ■

YELLOWSTONE 'SUPERVOLCANO'

An American team of seismologists, scientists who study earthquakes, have been working in part of the Yellowstone National Park, in the USA. They have discovered that the

huge magma chamber under part of the park is much bigger than previously believed. Magma is molten, or very hot liquid, rock.

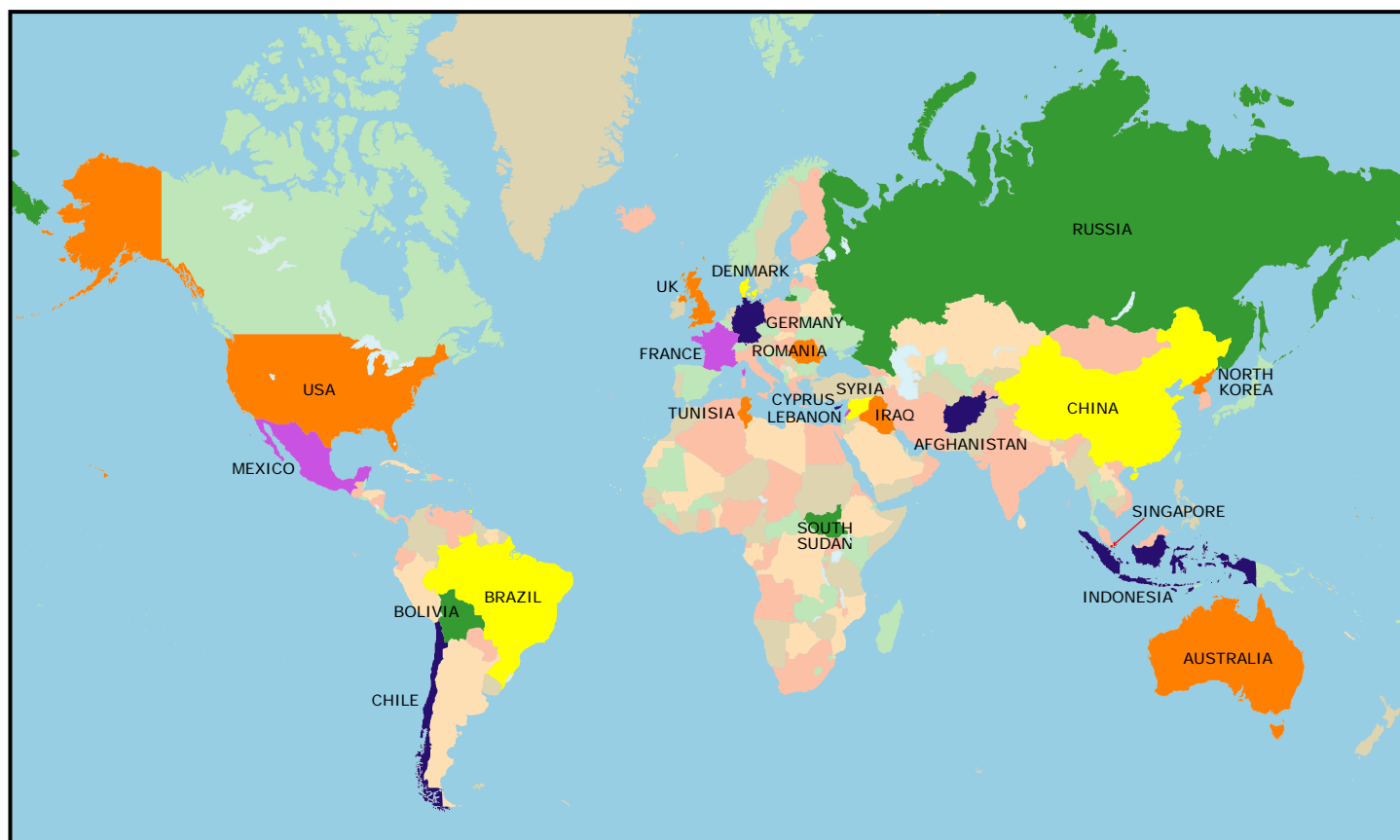
Yellowstone Park was set up in 1872. It is thought to be the world's first national park. Yellowstone covers a large area. Most of the park is in the state of Wyoming. It also extends into Idaho and Montana. There are large herds of bison and elk living in Yellowstone. It is also home to many grizzly bears and wolves.

Part of Yellowstone is above what's known as a geological 'hot-spot'. This means the area often has volcanic or earthquake activity. Large areas of the park can even move up and down by a few centimetres. This depends on the pressure of the magma in the large chamber below. There are frequent earthquakes. Yet most of these are not very powerful.

Volcanic activity does not always mean volcanic eruptions. In part of the park hot water and steam erupt from the ground. These are known as geysers. The most famous one is called Old Faithful. At regular intervals, it forces out a narrow jet of hot water about 40 metres (130 feet) into the air. Old Faithful is one of more than 300 geysers in Yellowstone Park.

The volcanic activity happens around a place known as the Yellowstone Caldera. This is in the north west of Wyoming. The caldera is a huge circular shaped area. It is about 55 kilometres (34 miles) wide and 72 kilometres (55 miles) across. Almost all the way around the caldera is a range of hills or higher ground. Calderas are formed when the ground sinks or collapses after a volcanic eruption.

Scientists believe that the Yellowstone Caldera was formed by



This map shows countries to which news stories refer in this issue. Visit www.newsademic.com for more detailed world maps.

several huge volcanic eruptions. The most recent was about 640,000 years ago. Others happened 1.3 million and 2.1 million years ago. The Yellowstone Lake covers part of the caldera. A river, called the Yellowstone River, flows in and out of the lake.

The Yellowstone Caldera is often described as a 'supervolcano'. Eruptions from these are many thousand of times bigger than normal volcanoes. Supervolcanoes happen where there is a large magma chamber just below the Earth's crust. This is why these places are called geological hotspots. The Yellowstone Caldera is above one of the world's largest 'hotspots'.

Seismometers have been put all around Yellowstone Park. These devices, which are also called seismographs, record earthquakes. They measure how powerful the tremors are, and for how long they last.



Yellowstone River flowing through part of the Yellowstone Caldera

Earthquakes produce seismic waves. These are waves of energy that travel through underground rocks. Seismic waves slow down when they go through magma. The team of scientists used the seismometers to record where the waves were slower. From this information they worked out the size of the magma chamber.

The scientists now believe the magma chamber is about 88 kilometres (55 miles) long and 29 kilometres (18 miles) wide. It has a depth

of between 1.6 and 14.5 kilometres (one and nine miles). This is two and a half times bigger than previously thought.

Past eruptions of the Yellowstone supervolcano covered the whole of North America in thick ash. Huge amounts of volcanic ash in the atmosphere must have quickly spread around the world. The climate probably changed, as ash in the air will make temperatures colder. From previous eruptions it seems that the Yellowstone supervolcano erupts around every 700,000 years. Yet experts say it is difficult to predict when the next one will happen. ▣

PURGE IN NORTH KOREA

On 12th December a North Korean television newsreader made an announcement. He said that Jang Sung-taek had been executed. The newsreader said that Mr Jang had been found guilty of very serious crimes.

Mr Jang was thought to be one of the most powerful people in the country. North Korea's leader is Kim Jong-un. Mr Jang was his uncle, as he was married to Mr Kim's father's sister. Several people who work with Mr Jang were also executed. When a group of senior people are violently removed from an organisation in this way, it is called a purge.

North Korea and South Korea used to be one country. In 1910 Korea was taken over by Japan. Soon after Japan's defeat, at the end of the Second World War (1939 – 1945), the North and South became separate countries.

In 1950 the North invaded the South. This led to the Korean War, which lasted for three years. The United Nations (UN), with mainly

American troops, helped the South. China supported the North. The war ended in a truce. Yet no peace treaty has ever been signed between North and South Korea.

The border between the countries is where the two opposing armies were facing each other when fighting stopped in 1953. The border, called the De-Militarized Zone (DMZ), is a narrow strip of land covered in mines and barbed wire. Today, thousands of soldiers still face each other across the DMZ.



After the Korean War, North Korea became a very secretive country. It is often described as the world's last remaining Stalinist state. The word Stalinist comes from the former Russian leader Joseph Stalin (1878 – 1953). He became a dictator who controlled Russia under very strict rules. Under Stalin there were frequent purges. People who criticised him were often sent to prison, or sentenced to death.

Nowadays, South Korea holds democratic elections for its politicians and president. Several of its large companies are world leaders in computer technology, shipbuilding and industrial design. It also has more internet connections than any other country.

South Korea has the world's 12th-biggest economy. Yet it's thought that thousands of people in North Korea do not have enough to eat. There is not much electric power. Only senior people in the government and army have enough food and supplies.

Most of North Korea's money is spent on weapons. Within the last ten years the country has developed and tested a nuclear bomb. The North Korean army is the fifth largest in the world.



North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un

It's difficult to know what life is like for ordinary people in North Korea. The country's leaders control the newspapers and television and radio broadcasts. News reports from other countries are blocked.

Members of one family have run North Korea since it became a separate country. Kim Il-sung ruled the country for 46 years. After his death, his son, Kim Jong-il, took over. Kim Jong-il died two years ago. He was succeeded by one of his sons, Kim Jong-un. Not much is known about the current leader, but he is only about 30 years old.

It's thought that Mr Jang helped Mr Kim when he took over after his father died in 2011. No one outside North Korea knows why Mr Jang was killed. He may have been planning to depose Mr Kim. Mr Kim probably ordered his uncle's execution. He might have arranged the purge to show others that he is a powerful leader. ■

SPIDER DIET

Spiders prey on, or catch and kill, flying insects or other spiders. A few larger ones eat small birds. For this reason spiders are believed to be meat-eaters, or carnivores.

However, a recent study by two scientists suggests that this may not be true. The scientists suspect that many spiders are really omnivores. This means they eat both meat (insects and other spiders) and parts of plants.

Spiders are arachnids. This name comes from the Ancient Greek word for 'spider'. People who are scared of spiders have arachnophobia. This is a combination of the Greek words for 'spider' and 'fear'.

There are thought to be around 43,600 different types of spider. They can be found everywhere in the world except for Antarctica. All spiders have eight legs, but they differ in size. The smallest have a body length of only 0.37 millimetres (0.015 inches). The largest, called the Goliath birdeater, can have a leg span of 25 centimetres (9.8 inches). All spiders are able to produce silk. It is from this that they make their webs.



Orb web spider

The scientists studied orb web spiders. These types of spiders are very common. Their webs trap flying insects. Yet grains of pollen, from plants and trees, and fungus

spores also get stuck in their webs. The pollen and spores are blown by the wind.

Spiders do not have teeth and are unable to eat solid things. Instead they cover their food with enzymes. These turn the food into a liquid, which the spiders then suck up. Many living things have enzymes that help to digest, or break down, food. Normally they work inside the body.

The scientists noticed that the spiders ate some of the grains of pollen, which were attached to their webs. They even ate the pollen when flying insects were caught in their webs. This, the scientists say, shows that the spiders were not eating pollen because it was the only available food. Instead the spiders seem to know that the best diet is a mixture of 'plant and meat'.

From their experiments the scientists worked out that roughly 25% of what the spiders ate was pollen. The other 75% is flying insects. The scientists say that, as they eat this amount of pollen, orb web spiders are not carnivores but omnivores. Even though they only studied orb web spiders the scientists suspect that many other types of spider have a similar diet. ■

WI-FI EXPERIMENT

A group of 15-year-old schoolgirls in Denmark recently set up an experiment. They wanted to find out if sleeping next to their mobile phones affected their concentration.

The schoolgirls' story was reported in several newspapers. The reports suggested that the experiment showed Wi-Fi was bad for people's brains. Some people criticised the newspaper reports. What

the girls' did, they argued, was not a proper scientific experiment.

Wi-Fi is the name of a popular technology. It allows electronic devices, such as computers and mobile phones, to connect to the internet using radio waves. This means there is no need for any wire connections.

For their experiment the girls planted 12 trays of garden cress. This is a small plant that grows very quickly. At their school they put six of the trays in one room and six in another. One room contained wireless router equipment. The other room did not have any wireless equipment.

After 12 days the girls noticed that the plants in the two rooms were different. In one they looked normal. Yet the plants in the room with the routers had turned brown. They looked as if they had died. The girls said that there were equal amounts of light in both rooms. They also gave all the plants the same amount of water.



Garden cress

Many people have wondered if Wi-Fi and mobile phones affect people's health. In the Netherlands some researchers have claimed that wireless radio signals have damaged the leaves and bark of some trees.

However, Wi-Fi radio waves, or signals, are not strong. For example, the radio waves are similar to those produced by microwave ovens. Nowadays many people have these

ovens in their kitchens. They are used to quickly heat or cook foods. The radiation from a microwave oven is roughly 100,000 times more than the radiation from Wi-Fi signals. This type of radiation is called electromagnetic radiation.

Some scientists have suggested reasons for the cress turning brown. For instance, wireless equipment gives off heat. So the room with the wireless equipment was probably warmer than the other one. What's more, they say, it is wrong to compare garden cress with a human brain. So far nobody has ever shown that Wi-Fi signals harm people's health.

Even though some people complained about the newspaper reports they did not criticise the schoolgirls. They said they were impressed that the children had set up the experiment. What was wrong, they explained, was writing about the experiment as if it was done under proper scientific conditions. ■

LAST VOLKSWAGEN KOMBI

A factory in Brazil has announced that it will stop making Volkswagen Kombis at the end of December. The factory is the only one in the world that still makes the vehicles. Production of the famous car will therefore come to an end. The first Volkswagen Kombi was made 63 years ago.

Today Volkswagen is one of the most successful car making companies in the world. Volkswagen is German for 'people's car'. In the 1930s Adolf Hitler became the German leader. Then, only a few people owned cars, as they were very expensive. Hitler wanted to build a simple car, which ordinary

Germans could afford to buy. This was what Volkswagen called its 'Type 1'.

After the end of the Second World War (1939 – 1945) the Type 1 became the famous Volkswagen Beetle. The Kombi was originally called the 'Type 2'. The first Type 2s were made at Volkswagen's factory, in Wolfsburg, in 1950. Over the years the vehicles have been called many names. These include the Volkswagen (or VW) transporter, camper van, bus, microbus, minibus, and even hippie van.



Volkswagen Kombi

When they were first made, Kombis had an unusual design. The engine was at the back and the driver sat above the front wheels. The vehicles became very popular in many countries. They were one of the first in which beds could be fitted. They also had many other uses. For instance, in Germany they were used as ambulances and police cars. However, some people thought Kombis were more dangerous than other cars. If they crashed the driver and the front seat passenger were not protected.

At the end of the 1970s new laws about car design were introduced in many countries. These meant that all cars had to have certain safety features. As it would be difficult to include these in the Kombi, production in Germany ended in 1979. However, factories in other countries such as Mexico

and Brazil continued to make them. Similar safety **restrictions** in Mexico meant its Kombi factory closed in 1995.

The Kombi factory in Brazil was opened in 1957. Since then around 1.5 million Kombis have been made in the country. The cars are very popular. This is because they are less expensive than other van-like vehicles. In Brazil, Kombis are used as school buses, ambulances, and hearses, or vehicles that carry coffins. Some owners have even turned their Kombis into mobile roadside food and drink stalls.

The factory that makes Kombis in Brazil is near São Paulo, the largest city in the country. It used to make around 600 Kombis every month. New safety laws mean that all new vehicles in Brazil will now have to have airbags and special anti-locking brakes. The factory owners say that fitting these to the Kombi's simple design would be too expensive. So, from the end of December, the factory will no longer make them. ■

NEW PRIME MINISTER IN TUNISIA

Mehdi Jomaa was appointed as Tunisia's **interim** prime minister on 14th December. Mr Jomaa will now try to form what's known as a 'caretaker government'.

At the beginning of 2011 a revolution took place in Tunisia. After huge street protests, the country's president, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, was forced to leave the country. Mr Ben Ali had run Tunisia for over 20 years. The demonstrators were angry about government corruption, the power of the police and the lack of proper elections.

What happened in Tunisia is sometimes called the Jasmine Revolution. Soon afterwards similar protests started in several other Arab countries such as Egypt, Yemen, Libya, Bahrain, and Syria. In these countries the demonstrators had similar complaints. All these protests are now often known as the 'Arab Spring'. So Tunisia was where the Arab Spring began.



Mehdi Jomaa, Tunisia's interim prime minister

Elections for a new Assembly, or parliament, were held in Tunisia in 2011. The Ennahda (Renaissance) Party got the most seats. Its leaders agreed with several other smaller parties to form a new government. One of the new Assembly's most important jobs was to write a new constitution for the country. These are the rules by which Tunisia is to be governed in future. Once the new constitution is approved new elections can be held.

Both Ennahda and the smaller parties, which agreed to work with it, are described as Islamist. Their supporters believe that certain religious laws should be included in the new constitution. However, opposition groups want Tunisia to become a secular state. This means religion and the way in which a country is governed are kept separate.

The differences between the supporters of Ennahda and those who want Tunisia to be a secular state have caused problems. There have been frequent street demonstrations

by both groups. Most have been in Tunis, the capital city.

Over the last ten months two political leaders have been killed, or assassinated. Both led smaller parties, which do not want any religious laws in the constitution. No one has been arrested for the assassinations. Many blame a group called the Salafists for the murders. Members of this group believe that everyone should live according to very strict Islamic laws. The Ennahda Party insists it had nothing to do with the deaths of the two politicians. Yet some complain that Ennahda should do more to control the Salafists.

To try to solve the problems Ennahda recently agreed to hand over power to an interim, or caretaker, government. All parties were invited to choose the interim prime minister. Eventually, they agreed that Mr Jomaa should be given the job. Mr Jomaa is an independent. This means he is not a member of any political party.

Mr Jomaa now has to form a government with other independents. As well as running the country, Mr Jomaa's caretaker government will finalise the new constitution. It will also organise new elections. These are now expected to take place next year. ■

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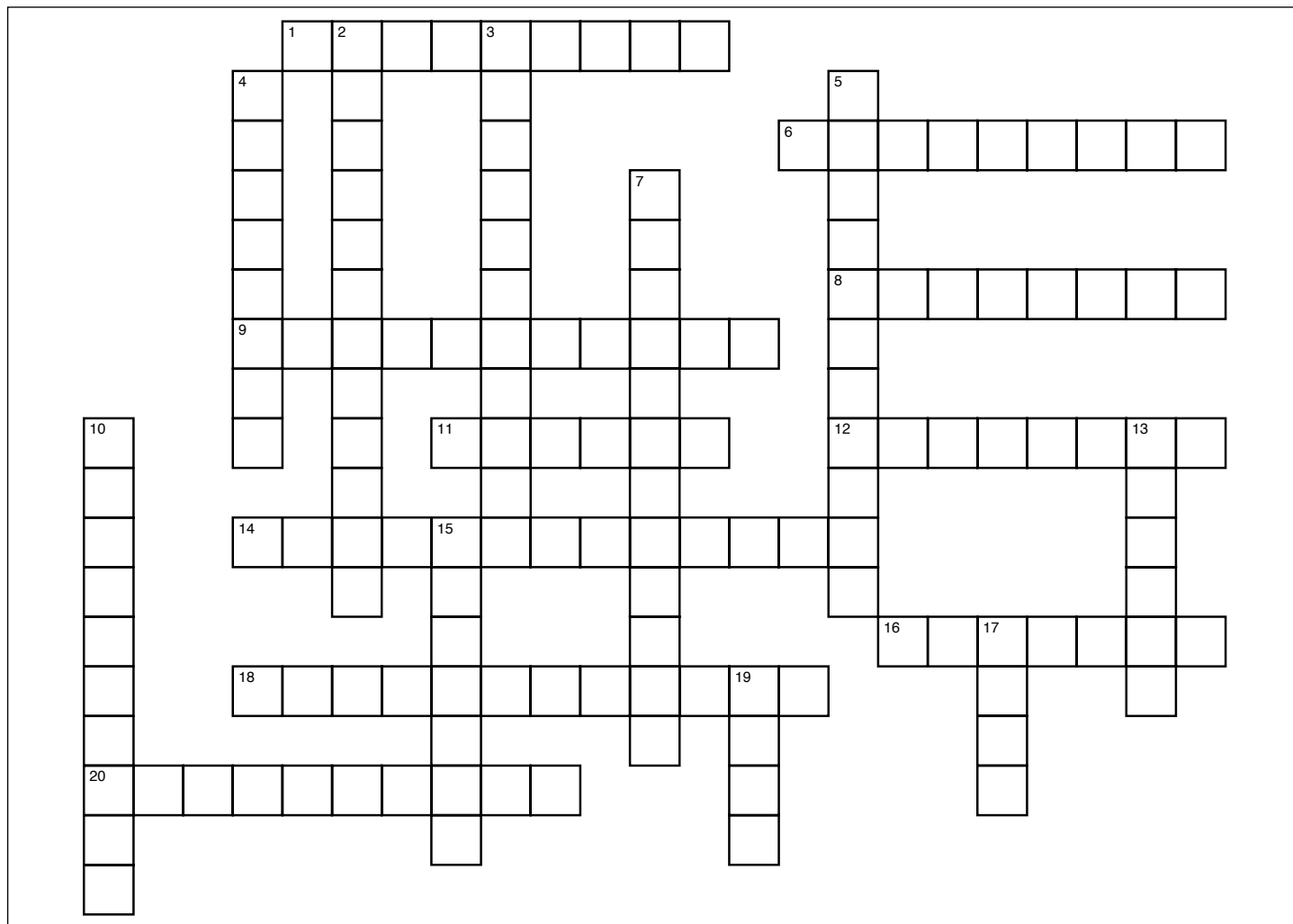
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ISSUE 213

GLOSSARY PUZZLE

INSTRUCTIONS: ① Complete the crossword. The answers are highlighted in orange in the news stories. There are 25 words highlighted and you need 20 of them to complete the crossword. ② Once you have solved the crossword go to the word search on the next page ➡



ACROSS

- 1 Noun (Plural)** Soldiers from Europe who took part in military expeditions to the Holy Land in 11th, 12th and 13th centuries
- 6 Noun (Plural)** Sailors
- 8 Noun (Plural)** The ideas or plans of a political party
- 9 Noun (Plural)** People who look after scientific equipment or work in a laboratory
- 11 Noun** A person (especially in the 1960s) who rejects normal lifestyles by having long hair, taking drugs and wearing colourful clothes.
- 12 Adverb** Without using a particular order or method
- 14 Noun** The act of paying attention to something without being distracted by other things
- 16 Noun (Plural)** Slight earthquakes
- 18 Verb** To have brought animals or plants under human control for transport, food, power or companionship
- 20 Noun (Plural)** People who win or are victorious in a battle or war

DOWN

- 2 Noun (Plural)** The act of keeping things within set limits or rules
- 3 Noun** An act of one company buying another
- 4 Verb** Deliberately killed someone as a form of punishment
- 5 Verb** Discovering the meaning of something, especially a code
- 7 Adjective** Describes something connected with improving people's lives and reducing suffering
- 10 Adjective** Related to the study of rocks
- 13 Noun** Something that is nice to own, do or eat, but it is not necessary
- 15 Noun** The act of avoiding something that you should do
- 17 Noun** A long poem of that tells a legendary story of what a hero has done
- 19 Noun** The reflection of sound, or radar signals, by a solid object

ISSUE 213

GLOSSARY PUZZLE *CONTINUED*

N O I T A R T N E C N O C U U Y D R
O A G N S R E D A S U R C Z L P X E
I O I C I M S T Y S A Z J M W C C S
T W O R F L L S R W P I O Q P Q E T
I H J J A P D O Z E O D R P D D O R
S I D E S T M Q P V N Q A K F W C I
I G W L B E I O T A R D M O S E C C
U M Q F R X L N R U O X Y E N I H T
Q R P T C I J D A M J R W K A P W I
C H E P C O E R E M U I Y Q L P W O
A Z B I Y T V S C X U Q E J U I G N
T K E O U G T R U A A H X V S H Y S
F S P C H I U L A C I G O L O E G S
U M E C C C S R O R E U Q N O C L R
R X T A S R E R A F A E S A C I P E
E O T M N T U U T B W Z D P P K T Q
S E L L K S N A I C I N H C E T U P
D E C I P H E R I N G G R U K E R O

INSTRUCTIONS: ③ Find 19 of the 20 crossword answers in the word search. Words can go vertically, horizontally, diagonally and back to front. ④ After finding the 19 words write down the 20th (or missing) word under the puzzle.

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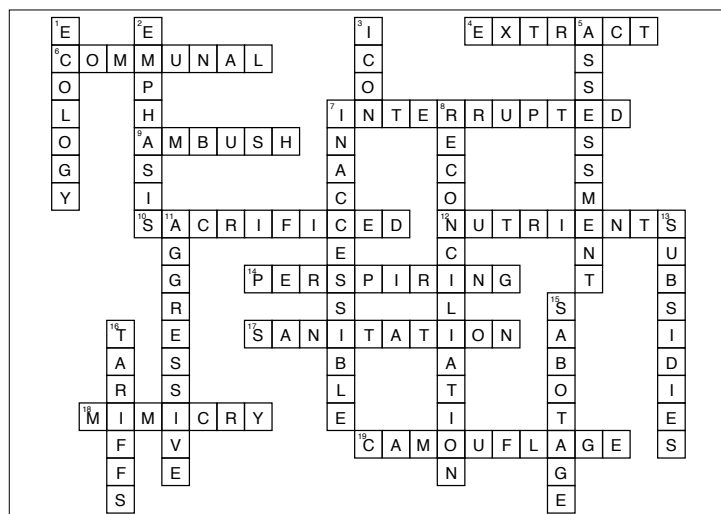


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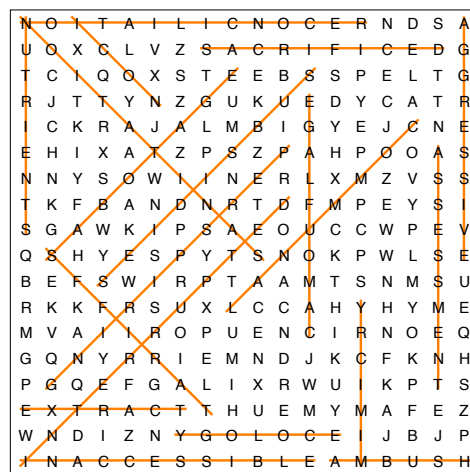
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MISSING WORD ANSWER =



ISSUE 212 ANSWERS



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